

REMARKS

The Office Action dated November 6, 2003 has been received and carefully noted. The above amendments to the claims, and the following remarks, are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

Upon entry of this Response, claims 1-12, 14-23, 25-35, 37-38, and 40-42 will be pending in the present application. Claims 13, 24, 36, and 39 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 14-16, 20, 25-27, 31, 35, 37, and 40-41 have been amended to include all of the subject matter previously recited in claims upon which they previously depended. No new matter has been added. Claims 1-12, 14-23, 25-35, 37-38, and 40-42 are respectfully submitted for consideration.

Rejection of Claims 36-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph:

Claims 36-38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The cancellation of claim 36 and the amendment of claim 37, upon which claim 38 depends, to place claim 37 in independent form directly addresses the comments included in the Office Action and renders the rejection of claims 36-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, moot. Hence, at least in view of the above remarks, cancellation of claim 36, and amendment of claim 37, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 36-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Rejection of Claims 13, 24, 36-37, and 39 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e):

Claims 13, 24, 36-37, and 39 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,157,643 issued to Ma (Ma '643). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As stated above, claims 13, 24, 36, and 39 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Claim 37 recites a method of stacking network switches. The method recited in claim 37 includes the step of providing a plurality of clustered switch blocks and the step of interconnecting each one of the plurality of clustered switch blocks to another one of the plurality of clustered switch blocks. According to the method recited in claim 37, interconnection of the plurality of clustered switch blocks forms a stack of clustered switch blocks. Also according to the method recited in claim 37, the step of providing a plurality of clustered switch blocks further includes the steps of providing a predetermined number of switch building blocks and interconnecting each of the predetermined number of switch building blocks to every other one of the predetermined number of switch building blocks in a meshed configuration. In addition, according to the method recited in claim 37, each of the predetermined number of switch building blocks is interconnected to every other one of the predetermined number of switch blocks through an individual stack link.

An advantage provided by certain embodiments of the method recited in claim 37 includes improvement of processing speed for layer three switches by allowing such

switches to utilize specialized high-performance hardware. Another advantage of certain embodiments of the method recited in claim 37 includes allowing for off-loading of a host CPU so that instruction decisions do not delay packet forwarding. Applicants respectfully submit that Ma '643 fails to disclose or suggest at least methods, devices, and/or systems that provide these advantages. Hence, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims pending in the present application are patentable over Ma '643 at least for this reason.

Ma '643 discloses "a switching fabric for a packet-switched communications network" (Abstract, lines 1-2). In Figure 2 thereof, Ma '643 also discloses a set of input elements, a set of internal elements, and a set of output elements. As illustrated in Figure 2, the input elements are connected to the internal elements and the internal elements are connected to the output elements.

However, Ma '643 fails to disclose or suggest at least building blocks that are "interconnected to every other one of said predetermined number of switch blocks through and individual stack link", as recited in claim 37.

As mentioned above, the input elements illustrated in Figure 2 of Ma '643 are only connected to the internal elements, and the output elements illustrated in Figure 2 are only connected to the internal elements. In other words, the input elements disclosed in Ma '643 are not connected to the output elements. Further, the input elements are not connected to each other, the internal elements are not connected to each other, and the output elements are not connected to each other. Therefore, at least in view of the above,

Ma '643 fails to disclose or suggest the "individual stack link" recited in claim 37 of the present application. Therefore, at least in view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 37 is patentable over Ma '643.

Claims 13, 24, 36, and 39 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Hence, the rejection of claims 13, 24, and 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) has been rendered moot.

At least in view of the above, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over Ma '643 is earnestly solicited.

Allowable Subject Matter:

Claims 1-12 have been acknowledged to be allowable. Claims 14-23, 25-35, and 40-42 have been acknowledged as containing allowable subject matter, but have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

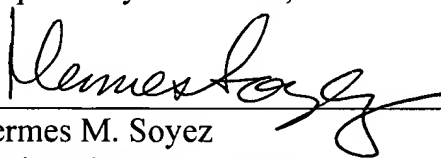
Applicants thank the Examiner for the time spent in reviewing claims 1-12, 14-23, 25-35, and 40-42 and for acknowledging that these claims are either allowed or contain allowable subject matter. Applicants also respectfully submit that the amendment of claims 14-16, 20, 25-27, 31, 35, and 40-41 to place each of these claims in independent form directly addresses the comments included in the Office Action. At least in view of the above amendment and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claims 14-23, 25-35 and 40-42 is earnestly solicited.

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the comments included in the Office Action have been addressed and that all of the objections and rejections contained in the Office Action have been overcome. Hence, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-12, 14-23, 25-35, 37-38, and 40-42 are in condition for allowance. It is therefore respectfully requested that all claims pending in the present application be allowed, and that this application be passed to issue.

If for any reason the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact, by telephone, the applicants undersigned representative at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper is not being timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension together with any additional fees may be charged to Counsel's Deposit Account 50-2222.

Respectfully submitted,


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